

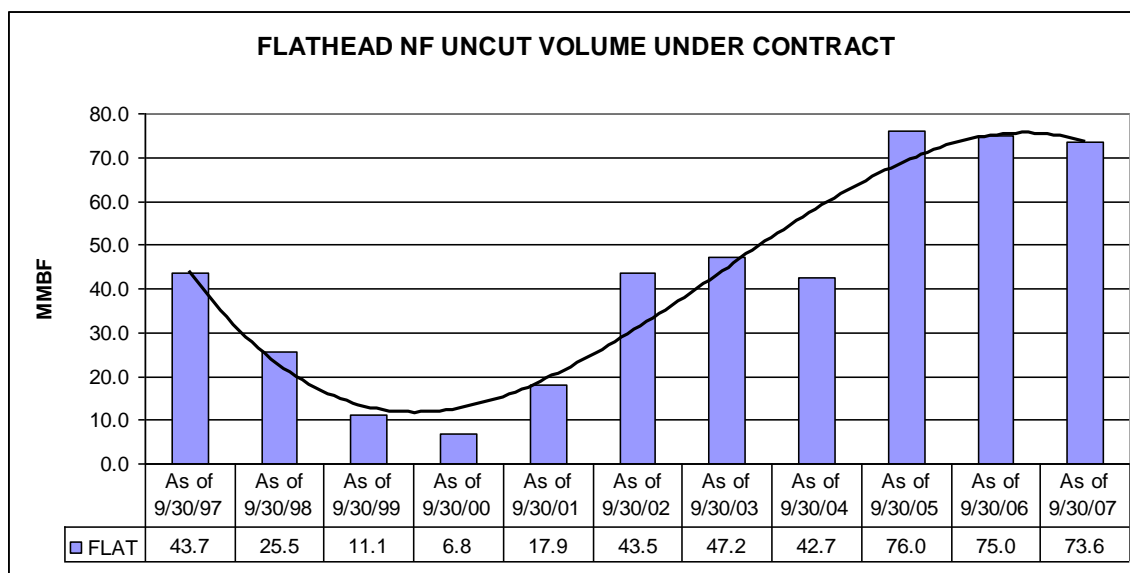
## Item #42: Timber Volume Under Contract

**Evaluation Question:** What is the relationship between volume under contract, and the 10 year average figure? Does the trend this contribute towards sustaining local timber industries?

**Method:** Timber volume under contract.

### Data Sources:

- Volumes obtained from standard Northern Region Timber Sale Statistics report, on intranet site: <http://fsweb.r1.fs.fed.us/forest/sales/reports/index.html>
- Montana's Forest Products Industry and Timber Harvest, 2004. Spoelma, Morgan et al, RMRS – RB-8, March 2008.
- February 2008, Todd Morgan presentation on Montana's Forest Products Industry. Available at [http://www.bber.umd.edu/forest/pdf/conditions/timber\\_task\\_force\\_send.pdf](http://www.bber.umd.edu/forest/pdf/conditions/timber_task_force_send.pdf)



**Figure 1: Flathead NF Uncut Volume UnderContract**

Volume under contract declined to a low of 6.8 MMBF in 2000, but has subsequently rebounded to about 75 MMBF. This represents approximately three years worth of timber offerings for the forest. Average in the prior 10 year period was 81 MMBF.

Overall Montana lumber production has been declining since the mid 1980s, due to a combination of market factors and availability constraints. National Forest lands currently supply about one quarter of the timber utilized by Montana mills, down from about 45% in the mid 1980s. Harvest from industrial lands has remained at about 35% of total harvest, with non-industrial private land harvest increasing somewhat as Federal land harvest declined.

Timber availability remains one of greatest challenges facing the woods products industry, and the decline in harvest on National Forest lands is a major concern. Statewide, mills are running at only 70% capacity, with 80-90% being more optimal. Any further reduction in National Forest

harvest levels has been predicted to result in additional mill closure(s). So, sustaining current volume under contract is critical to sustaining the infrastructure needed to support future forest vegetation management for fuels reduction or other management purposes.

While higher harvest levels would be of benefit to the timber industry, the stabilization of Flathead Forest volume under contract is a positive factor in contributing to sustaining local woods product industries.

**Recommended Actions:** Continue to monitor trends